

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 EUR-10 PM-03 PRS-01 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 NSC-10 NSCE-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00

EB-03 ACDA-10 RSR-01 AID-10 IO-03 L-02 /086 W
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R 172012 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1272
INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 05818

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, PDEY, PINT, IN, UK

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN'S CONSULTATIONS WITH
BRITISH ON INDIA

SUMMARY: FAR- RANGING DISCUSSION EMPHASIZED ERRATIC
NATURE OF INDIAN POLICYMAKING, POOR STATE OF ECONOMY,
AND DETERIORATING CENTRAL- GOVERNMENT MACHINERY. BRITISH
AGREED WITH MOYNIHAN THAT MOST RECENT PAKISTANI BEHAVIOR
IS DISAPPOINTING ON POW ISSUE, AND THAT INDIANS UNHAPPY
WITH BANGLADESH DECISION TO HOLD WAR CRIMES TRIALS.
DIFFERING HIGH- LEVEL HMG VIEWS OF IMPORTANCE OF SUB-
CONTINENT WERE ALSO TOUCHED UPON. END SUMMARY

1. IN FCO CONSULTATION MAY 15, AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN
BEGAN WITH HIS IMPRESSION, AFTER ADMITTEDLY VERY SHORT
STAY IN INDIA, THAT GOVERNMENT IS GOING THROUGH PROCESS
BEST DESCRIBED AS UNRAVELING. PM GANDHI'S POWER IS
ERODING WITHOUT ANYBODY ACQUIRING EQUIVALENT POWER TO
HOLD THINGS TOGETHER. CONGRESS PARTY IS AWARE OF THIS,
AS OF DETERIORATING ECONOMIC SITUATION. ITS POLITICAL
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PRONOUNCEMENTS INCREASINGLY VERGE ON THE HYSTERICAL, AS IN RECENT CHARGES OF US CONSPIRACY, SET FORTH IN A NEAR- STALINIST RHETORIC. NEVERTHELESS, HIGHEST GOI LEVELS MAKE IT CLEAR THEY SEEK CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH US.

2. IT IS CLEAR THAT MUCH OF THE ANTI- AMERICAN HYSTERIA IS BEING ORCHESTRATED BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY PRESS, MOYNIHAN CONTINUED, BUT THIS SEEMS TO INFLUENCE THE CONGRESS PARTY. CONGRESS UNDOUBTEDLY WAS ASTOUNDED BY SIGHT OF SOME 500,000 PEOPLE FROM VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY MARCHING ON BEHALF OF THE CPI THROUGH DELHI RECENTLY (MAY DAY).

3. IN REPLY, FCO DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY FOR ASIA SIR ERIC NORRIS SAID BRITISH SEE MUCH THE SAME PICTURE, THOUGH IN LESS STARK COLORS. HE OPINED THAT INDIAN DECISION TO FOLLOW SOCIALIST ECONOMIC PATH AFTER INDEPENDENCE HAD FROM THE FIRST CARRIED IMPLICATIONS OF AUTHORITARIANISM SIMILAR TO THAT OF COMMUNIST COUNTRIES IN MANY WAYS THOUGH HE CONCEDED AFTER SOME DISCUSSION MOYNIHAN' S POINT THAT THE AUTHORITARIAN RHETORIC WAS OF RELATIVELY RECENT VINTAGE. SUTHERLAND ADDED OBSERVATION THAT THIS NEW RHETORIC SHOULD BE SEEN IN CONTEXT OF STARKER, SHARPER RHETORIC DEVELOPED IN REST OF WORLD, INCLUDING WESTERN EUROPE, OVER SAME PERIOD OF TIME'

4. BRITISH SAID THEY HAD BEEN SERIOUSLY WORRIED FOUR OR FIVE YEARS AGO BY SIGNS OF A POSSIBLE PHYSICAL BREAK- UP OF INDIA. THIS DANGER SEEMED PAST. BENGAL, A POTENTIAL BREAKAWAY THREAT, HAS IN FACT DEVELOPED INTO SOMETHING OF AN INDIAN SUCCESS STORY. THEY AGREED WITH MOYNIHAN THAT " UNRAVELING" IN INDIA HAD TO DO MORE WITH THE DECLINE OF EFFICIENT CENTRAL GOVERNMENT MACHINERY, THAN WITH PHYSICAL BREAK- UP OF THE NATION. GOVERNMENT MACHINERY IS UNDERGOING INCREASING STRAIN AS HEAVIER AND HEAVIER PROBLEMS ARE DUMPED ON IT. CONGRESS PARTY IS OSSIFYING AND UNABLE TO RECREATE EFFECTIVE MACHINE. FRANKLY, NORRIS OPINED, GOI' S CAPITULATION TO THE VARIOUS LINGUISTIC POLITICAL MOVEMENTS IN RECENT YEARS HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THIS WEAKNESS.

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5. BY SAME TOKEN, REFERRING TO AMBASSADOR' S RECENT CONVERSATION WITH INDIAN DEFENSE SCIENCE ADVISER ON SOVIET NUCLEAR " UMBRELLA" (REPORTED FROM NEW DELHI) BRITISH ARE NOT INCLINED TO BELIEVE SOVIETS PREPARED TO DO ALL THAT MUCH FOR INDIA, OR THAT INDIANS PREPARED TO DRAW AS CLOSELY TO SOVIETS AS " NUCLEAR UMBRELLA" INTER-

PRETATION MIGHT SUGGEST. THEY THINK OF INDO- SOVIET
RELATIONSHIP AS POSSIBLY EPHEMERAL PROCESS IN WHICH
EFFECTS OF SOVIET- CHINESE COMPETITION ARE NOT VERY
CLEARLY DEFINED.

6. MOYNIHAN SAID HE AGREED THAT SOVIETS ARE NOT PRE-

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 05818

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PARRED TO DO MUCH FOR INDIA ECONOMICALLY. HE REFERRED
TO CURRENT FOOD RIOTS WHICH - CONTRARY TO POPULAR
IMAGINATION - ARE NOT A RECURRING FEATURE OF INDIAN
SCENE. LAST ONES HAD BEEN IN 1966. BRITISH AGREED
ECONOMIC SITUATION BAD, BUT THOUGHT IT APPEARED WORSE
THAN IT WAS PARTLY DUE TO SHOCK ADMINISTERED TO
CONFIDENT INDIAN POLICYMAKERS AND OUTSIDE OBSERVERS BY
CURRENT DROUGHT SO SOON AFTER MIRACLES OF GREEN
REVOLUTION. MUCH WILL DEPEND ON WHETHER OR NOT MONSOON
ARRIVES ON SCHEDULE. MOYNIHAN SAID WHETHER OR NOT
MONSOON ARRIVES, INDIAN ECONOMY IS IN TROUBLE. TALK
THEN SHIFTED TO AID CONSORTIUM MATTERS REPORTED
SEPARATELY.

7. TOUCHING BRIEFLY ON CURRENT POST- SIMLA NEGOTIATIONS,
BOTH SIDES AGREED PAKISTANI PUBLIC POSITION, PUNCTUATED

BY MAY 11 REFERRAL OF POW TRANSFER QUESTION TO ICJ,
SEEMS DISAPPOINTING, CONSIDERING PREVIOUS HOPES. HOW-
EVER, ALSO WOULD APPEAR INDIANS ARE UNHAPPY WITH
BANGLADESH FOR DECISION TO GO AHEAD WITH WAR CRIMES
TRIALS. HOPE WAS EXPRESSED BY BRITISH AND BY MOYNIHAN
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THAT PRESENT OBSTACLES MAY PROVE TO BE ONLY TEMPORARY.

8. LATER, OVER LUNCH, DISCUSSION OCCURRED AMONG
BRITISH PRINCIPALS ABOUT BASIC HMG APPROACH TOWARD
INDIAN SUBCONTINENT. IT BECAME CLEAR THERE ARE
DIFFERENCES IN BRITISH OPINION AT HIGH (INCLUDING
MINISTERIAL) LEVELS AS TO ULTIMATE EFFECT EVENTS IN
SUBCONTINENT HAVE ON REST OF WORLD. SOME FEEL EVENTS
THERE ARE BOUND TO HAVE LONGER- TERM, IF NOT ALWAYS
IMMEDIATE, REPERCUSSIONS ON TRIANGULAR GREAT POWER
RELATIONS AND OTHER THINGS, WHILE ANOTHER BODY OF
OPINION FEELS SUBCONTINENT IS PRETTY WELL CUT OFF FROM
REST OF WORLD AND ULTIMATE EFFECT OF EVENTS THERE WILL
HAVE MARGINAL CONSEQUENCES ELSEWHERE. LATTER WAS
SAID TO BE MOST FASHIONABLE VIEW AROUND WHITEHALL THESE
DAYS, BUT IT COULD CHANGE.

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